

THE HYGIENE OF INSTRUCTION

*A Study of The Mental Health
of the School Child*

BY

LAWRENCE AUGUSTUS AVERILL, PH.D.

*Head of the Department of Psychology in the Massachusetts State Teachers
College at Worcester. Author of Psychology for Normal Schools, Elements
of Educational Psychology, Educational Hygiene. Member Advisory
Committee Worcester Child Guidance Clinic, etc., etc.*



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON • NEW YORK • CHICAGO • DALLAS

SAN FRANCISCO

The Riverside Press Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY LAWRENCE AUGUSTUS AVERILL

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO REPRODUCE
THIS BOOK OR PARTS THEREOF IN ANY FORM**



**The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE • MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.**

**RIVERSIDE TEXTBOOKS
IN EDUCATION**

EDITED BY ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

**DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY**

TO
MY MOTHER

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

WHILE the importance of health may be said to be recognized somewhat generally, the fixed health prejudices and superstitions and the habits of personal neglect which characterize many people make progress in the development of a sound personal and family hygiene discouragingly slow. While the key to the problem undoubtedly lies with the young and in the training of teachers, speaking generally, and with due allowance for the work done here and there by individual institutions, few of the teachers coming from our teachers colleges to-day, despite the recent progress in hygiene teaching which has been made, are prepared to assume the instructional and administrative responsibilities with regard to the physical and mental health of their pupils which every classroom teacher should assume. The teaching of subject-matter still too often takes precedence over the teaching of health habits, and the mastery of facts still too often is regarded as more important than an understanding of the conditions of health and the logic of disease. The health attitudes of the pupil, and his ability to form wise judgments for the regulation of personal, family, or community health, too often are undeveloped because the teacher is untrained for such service and the supervisor places the emphasis in instruction elsewhere.

One of the by-products of the World War has been a new interest not only in the health of the body, but the health of the mind as well. The evident need for sound physical health was called forcibly to the attention of our people by the extensive rejection of recruits as unfit for military service, while the numerous and serious nervous disorders of returning soldiers, and the very important work which has been done in the reëducation of the victims of shell-shock,

have revealed new possibilities in the field of mental hygiene. The cures effected by the psychiatrist have directed attention to the prevention as well as to the cure of mental disorders; the work of the psychologist has revealed the importance of personal habits and attitudes and of home surroundings in the development and the prevention of mental defects; the criminologist has directed attention anew to the study of the hygiene of the youthful criminal; and the hygienist has been able to place new emphasis on the importance of a personal development of proper health habits, diet, sleep, recreation, regulated work, and the practical life habits developed by a sound individual hygiene.

The application of the curative technique of these many workers to preventive work was but a natural step, and the organization of the field of mental hygiene, the prime purpose of which is prevention rather than cure, was the natural result. In this relatively new field it is sought to prevent mental disorders by proper training methods, and to reëducate those — genius or defective or normal — who have already started on a wrong mental path. That the prime requisite in all such cases is a sound personal and home-life hygiene has been shown to be one of the interesting developments of the work.

In the present volume the author has outlined the scope of this new subject, and has stated in simple form its aims, techniques, and accomplishments in dealing with the problems of the mental health of the school child. The treatment here given is complete in itself, and supplements well the author's *Educational Hygiene* and Terman's *Hygiene of the School Child*. The three volumes form a valuable treatment of the field of child hygiene — both physical and mental — for use as textbooks in teacher-training institutions.

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY

PREFACE

THERE have been few developments in recent years in the general field of psychology of more significance than the mental-hygiene movement. In an age of extraordinary family and social unrest wherein the old restraints and safeguards of the home are proving wholly inadequate to orient boys and girls rationally and harmoniously to life and its unusual demands, and wherein parents, teachers, and all other guardians and companions of children are more than wontedly concerned over the magnitude of the task with which they are charged, there is tremendous need for the wise and sane counsel that mental hygiene has to offer.

The keynote of all progressive work in modern medicine, hygiene, sanitation, criminology, etc., is prevention. Very much of disease, of suffering, of crime, is preventable by known methods. So with mental conflict and maladjustment. If parents and teachers but realized the tragic ease with which bad habits and attitudes, unfortunate conditioned reflexes, and hampering and restricting inhibitions are builded athwart the neural pathways during the early formative years of a child's life, they would be happily in a position to forestall many of the diseases and irregularities of the personality that make their unseemly and malign appearance later on to mar and constrict and distort.

The psychopath, the neuropath, the ament, the criminal, and the delinquent might in many if not most cases have been saved from playing their sad rôles by early wise observance of a few simple but fundamental principles of mental hygiene. But far more numerous than these extreme types are those legions of otherwise quite normal and re-

sponsible people who are the victims of unhealthful associations, morbid fears and anxieties, paralyzing reflexes and inhibitions, irrepressible mental conflicts, unsocial and anti-social attitudes and traits, inferiority complexes, personal disharmonies, and other types of maladjustment which sap and enervate and drag down. For these throngs of tempest-tossed human beings the calm ministry of mental hygiene in those early days when the tares were being sown would have been a solace and a benediction.

Most mental conflicts have their source in the childhood years — often even in infancy. If some clever mental analyst could unwind, thread by thread, the unsymmetrical personality of the criminal, or the delinquent, or the sorely tried psychopathic individual, he would find in almost every case the first twist in the thread far back in the school or the pre-school rings of growth and experience. True, heredity may have been unsound and predisposing, but even weak heredity can to a degree be counteracted by wise manipulation of the early environment. Prevention of distorted and disharmonious personalities is as achievable through observance of the principles of mental health as is prevention of physical disease and deficiency. But the beginnings must be made in childhood.

Teachers more than any others, save the parents themselves, should be familiar with the more common of these principles of mental hygiene in order that they may be able to do all things possible to safeguard the personalities of their children both within school and without, and foster in them those traits and attitudes of mind and character that make inevitably for the fullest, completest, and most harmonious lives. To aid teachers and to inspire parents to discharge these high obligations to childhood this volume has been written.

LAWRENCE A. AVERILL

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR SUPPLEMENTARY USE IN CONNECTION WITH THIS VOLUME

1. Adler, A. *The Neurotic Constitution.*
2. Averill, L. A. *Educational Hygiene.*
3. Bronner, A. F. *The Psychology of Special Abilities and Disabilities.*
4. Burnham, W. H. "Mental Health for Normal Children." Bulletin No. 38, Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene.
5. Burnham, W. H. *The Normal Mind.*
6. Cameron, H. C. *The Nervous Child.*
7. Cannon, W. B. *Bodily Changes in Pain, Anger, Fear and Rage.*
8. Chamberlain, A. F. *The Child and Childhood in Folk-Thought.*
9. Cubberley, E. P. *Public School Administration.*
10. Dewey, J. *Interest and Effort in Education.*
11. Fenton, N. *Self-Direction and Adjustment.*
12. Franz, S. I. *Nervous and Mental Reëducation.*
13. Freeman, F. N. *The Psychology of the Common Branches.*
14. Gesell, A. *The Pre-School Child from the Standpoint of Public Hygiene and Education.*
15. Goddard, H. *School Training of Defective Children.*
16. Gould, G. M. *Biographical Clinics* (6 vols.).
17. Green, G. H. *Psychanalysis in the Classroom.*
18. Groves, E. R. *Personality and Social Adjustment.*
19. Healy, W. *Mental Conflicts and Misconduct.*
20. Hollingworth, L. S. *Special Talents and Defects.*
21. Horn, J. L. *The Education of Exceptional Children.*
22. La Rue, D. W. *Mental Hygiene.*
23. Mateer, F. *The Unstable Child.*
24. McDougall, W. *Outline of Abnormal Psychology.*
25. Miller, H. C. *The New Psychology and the Teacher.*
26. Morgan, J. B. *The Psychology of the Maladjusted School Child.*

27. Myers, G. C. *The Learner and His Attitude.*
28. Offner, M., and Whipple, G. M. *Mental Fatigue.*
29. Paton, S. *Human Behavior.*
30. Patri, A. *Child Training.*
31. Posey, W. C. *The Hygiene of the Eye.*
32. Pratt, G. K. "A Mental Health Primer." Bulletin No. 42, Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene.
33. Pyle, W. H. *The Psychology of Learning.*
34. Sales, W. B., and Nudd, H. W. *The Problem Child in School.*
35. Stableton, J. K. *Your Problems and Mine.*
36. Stedman, L. M. *Education of Gifted Children.*
37. Terman, L. M. *Genetic Studies of Genius* (Vol. 1.).
38. Terman, L. M. *The Hygiene of the School Child.*
39. Terman, L. M. *The Intelligence of School Children.*
40. Thomas, F. W. *Training for Effective Study.*
41. Van Waters, M. *Youth in Conflict.*
42. Wallin, J. E. W. *Clinical and Abnormal Psychology.*
43. Wallin, J. E. W. *The Education of Handicapped Children.*
44. Wallin, J. E. W. *The Mental Health of the School Child.*
45. Wells, F. L. *Mental Adjustments.*
46. White, W. A. *The Mental Hygiene of Childhood.*
47. Williams, E. H., and Hoag, E. B. *Our Fear Complexes.*
48. Williams, F. E., et al. *Social Aspects of Mental Hygiene.*
49. Williams, J. F. *Personal Hygiene Applied.*
50. Woodrow, H. *Brightness and Dullness in Children.*
51. Yeomans, E. *Shackled Youth.*

In addition to the preceding volumes, reference is also made frequently in the following chapters to the publications of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, and of the Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene; to the files of *Mental Hygiene*, of the *Mental Hygiene Bulletin*, of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, of the *Psychological Clinic*, of the *Pedagogical Seminary*, and of other educational and psychological periodicals; to the *Transactions* of the Fourth International Congress of School Hygiene, and the *Twenty-Fourth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education; and to Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education*, etc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. THE HYGIENE OF ATTITUDE	1
II. THE HYGIENE OF PERFORMANCE	19
III. THE MENTAL HYGIENE OF THE SCHOOL DAY	41
IV. THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF MENTAL HEALTH	61
V. HABIT AND THE CONDITIONED REFLEX	82
VI. THE HYGIENE OF CLASSIFICATION	110
(1) The Mentally Deficient Child	
VII. THE HYGIENE OF CLASSIFICATION (<i>continued</i>)	137
(2) The Gifted Child	
VIII. THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE PROBLEM CHILD	166
(1) The Deceitful Child	
(2) The Disobedient Child	
(3) The Emotionally Abnormal Child	
(4) The Indifferent Child	
IX. THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE PROBLEM CHILD	
(<i>continued</i>)	192
(5) The Irresponsible Child	
(6) The Lazy Child	
(7) The Child Lacking in Self-Control	
(8) The Selfish Child	
X. MENTAL HYGIENE AND THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS	218
(1) Language	
Reading	
Spelling	
Writing	
Composition	
Literature	
(2) Mathematics	

XI. MENTAL HYGIENE AND THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS	
<i>(continued)</i>	246
(3) The Expressive Arts	
Drawing	
Music	
(4) History	
(5) Geography	
(6) Science	
Natural History	
Elementary Science	
XII. THE MENTAL HYGIENE OF STUDY AND STUDY	
METHODS	277
XIII. HOME SOURCES OF CONFLICT	302
XIV. MENTAL HYGIENE, THE NEW EDUCATION, AND	
THE NEW TEACHER	328
XV. THE CHILD-GUIDANCE CLINIC	354
INDEX	381

THE HYGIENE OF INSTRUCTION



CHAPTER I

THE HYGIENE OF ATTITUDE

The meaning of attitude, or "mind set." As an approach to the study of attitudes or mental "sets," consider the following opposite viewpoints,¹ concerning tobacco and tobacco users, expressed by two individuals:

Says Sandeau:

Let me tell you that if you have never found yourself extended upon a divan with soft and downy cushions on some winter's evening before a clear and sparkling fire, enveloping the globe of your lamp or the white light of your wax candle with the smoke of a well-seasoned cigar, letting your thoughts ascend as uncertain and vaporous as the smoke floating around you; I repeat, that if you have never yet enjoyed this situation you have still to be initiated into one of the sweetest of our terrestrial joys. The cigar deadens sorrow, distracts our enforced inactivity, renders idleness sweet and easy to us, and peoples our solitude with a thousand gracious images.

Says Schaeffer:

Talk about a decent man or woman who either chews, snuffs, or puffs! No sensible man or woman will believe it. Tell me a man who chews tobacco is virtuous. I know better! Tell me a man who chews tobacco is wicked and licentious, and I will then believe you. If tobacco be good, how is it that the lewdest, loosest,

¹ M. V. O'Shea: *Tobacco and Mental Efficiency*. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

basest, foolishhest, the most unthrifty, most intemperate, most vicious, most debauched, most desperate, pursue it most; the wisest and the best abhor it, shun it, flee it, as the pest?

Were ever two contentions more flatly contradictory than these? With what gentle words does Sandeau, the Apologist, eulogize and apostrophize the weed! And with what torrential blasphemy does Schaeffer, the Denouncer, condemn both weed and user! Surely both men cannot be in the right; the same tobacco can hardly be "gracious" for an addict and "wicked and licentious" for an abstainer. Indeed it is extremely open to question whether either Sandeau or Schaeffer is right. If nicotine has the virtues which the former claims for it, then we all ought to smoke. If, on the other hand, it is associated with the vices that the latter imputes to it, we all ought to wage the liveliest crusade against its continued use. That is certainly an interesting and curious influence at work in the minds of those two no doubt most estimable gentlemen which is able to set them at such loggerheads over the subject of tobacco.

Now this strange influence operating in the minds of Messrs. Sandeau and Schaeffer we shall call, for want of a better term, their "mental set," which we may further define as the general attitude, or point of view, or characteristic adjustment of these men. The one has embraced the viewpoint that nicotine is good, even gracious, to man, and is so firmly convinced that this is the case that he is moved to pity for those who have never experienced its delights. The other has embraced quite the other viewpoint, and is so persuaded of the validity of his position as, on the one hand, to denounce in no uncertain terms all devotees of tobacco and, on the other, to laud and extol those who abstain from its use. The mental set of Sandeau is emphatically toward nicotine; Schaeffer's mental set is no less emphatically away from nicotine and toward abstention. There is no

question left in the mind of him who reads either statement that both men are thus characteristically and unalterably adjusted toward the general topic: tobacco. One cannot fancy any great change of attitude in either gentleman tomorrow, next month, or indeed, barring miracles, in a lifetime. And not only will these respective attitudes endure, but they will continue to grow stronger and more emphatic with the passing of time. Like habits, attitudes or mental sets become fortified through repeated practice.

The all-pervasiveness of attitudes. It is remarkable, when one stops to think about it, how completely we are all creatures of attitude, of mental set. Having developed an adjustment that pleases or satisfies us, we continue to exercise it until it becomes an integral part of our nature and of our character. Evidences of the all-pervasiveness of attitudes are innumerable and on every hand: life itself is little more than an accumulation of mental sets. Illustrations of these adjustments are observable interestingly in the attitudes which people develop and maintain toward no less common a situation than their daily work. Some individuals are indefatigable in their industry, tireless in their ambition to do the day's task and to do it with their might. From the scrub woman in the hallway to the great captain of industry beyond the office railing, this consuming attitude on the part of many toward the work of the world makes itself manifest to the discerning. Steadfastness, faithfulness, even enthusiasm, are stamped indelibly upon the labor performed by those who have the positive and aggressive mental set toward the tasks which it is their lot to perform. On the other hand, there are those other workmen whose attitude toward their work makes them wasteful, idle, and slothful. Found in all walks of life, from slave to master, and from serf to noble, laborers of this sort have always brought to their tasks a mental set that not only slows down

the wheels of industry, but far worse than that weakens and debases those who operate them. To shirk wherever possible; to skim here and pare down there; to work diligently under the regarding eye of an overseer, but to loaf consistently when that eye is turned in another direction; to despise toil and the fruits of toil; to become animated only when the whistle blows or the clock hands point the hour of closing — these are tokens of another attitude, another mental set toward work that is found strongly developed in not a few of those who perform the world's labor.

Yet another striking example of characteristic human attitudes and adjustments may be seen in the set developed by men toward custom or convention. To the mind and the way of thinking of the conservative, tradition is little short of sacred, whether that tradition concern family, social custom, politics, government, religion, education, racial and national characteristics, or what not. Major Ian Hay, to illustrate the traditional formalism and aloofness of his English countrymen, tells a story of six British soldiers who, after having been incarcerated for several days in a dugout, were at length liberated by a relief party. Two of the imprisoned Tommies were Scotchmen, and when found they were heatedly engaged in a theological argument; two others were Irishmen, and they were fighting; the remaining two were Englishmen, and they were completely disregarding one another for the abundantly sufficient reason that nobody had introduced them! Racial and national temper of this type exemplifies excellently the meaning of mental set.

In a similar vein, the Chinese celestials, previous at least to the advent of Occidental customs and influences among them, might be thought of as imbued with conservative ideals and attitudes. On the other hand, reds, revolutionists, and nihilists typify the most extreme of radical attitudes and mental sets. To the true Confucian the past is

hoary with tradition and sacred with convention and meaning; to the "red," convention and tradition are unblest survivals of a reprehensible and malicious past which cannot be uprooted too soon nor too violently. To a lesser degree, most countries and most commonwealths number or have numbered among their citizenry Whigs and Tories; the independents and the "Old Guard"; the conservatives and the progressives; liberals and reactionaries; conformers and dissenters; right wings and left wings; Republicans and Democrats; as well as all types of socialists and laborites. Each one of these multifarious brands of distinction represents a characteristic way of thinking, a political attitude, a political mental set.

The practical importance of attitude or "set." We take it for granted then that the characteristic adjustments we make to the innumerable life situations with which we come frequently in contact fasten themselves upon us with all the strength and tenacity of habits, and that we can no more throw off their shackles than we can throw off the shackles of habit. To be a worker or a drone; to be a conservative or a liberal; to be an optimist or a pessimist; to hunger and thirst after righteousness, or subsist on the flesh-pots of Egypt; to hoard or to expend; to hate or to love; to commingle or to draw apart; to flutter or to soar — it matters little so far as the central truth is concerned: every day and every hour confirm us in whatever inner attitude we are fashioning toward this or toward that recurring situation that faces us anon.

All this is immensely important, not because we must inevitably develop mental attitudes toward so many and diverse stimulating agents in the environment, but because the adjustments and sets which we hit upon may be either healthful or unhealthful. On the one hand, they may be positive, beneficial, rational; may make for a better-